

Civic Engagement

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Utah State Office of Education
Civics-Character Ed., Service Learning



Huh? So what is this?

Welcome to the premier issue of Civic Engagement, a quarterly newsletter for all those interested in civics, character education, and academic service learning (CCSL) in Utah schools. This circular will provide dialogue relating to civic education as well as post notification of upcoming CCSL events. It is hoped that this document will provide valuable information to school administrators and faculty, community councils and civic organizations, and any who may be interested in furthering the cause of civic engagement in the public schools.

Utah has always demonstrated a great interest in citizenship education and civic involvement. Recently, the Utah Coalition for Civic and Academic Service Learning was formed, bringing together several civic organizations in the Salt Lake area. This group has been very active in planning several events for teachers and patrons of education. As

numerous organizations are formed to address the documented need for character education among our nation's youth (http://www.cortland.edu/character/signs_iv.htm), there is a corresponding need to coordinate and collaborate amongst the groups, in order to effectively design and administer remedies.

We welcome your participation and involvement as you read this newsletter. We hope you will feel prompted to respond and become civically involved yourself. This publication has been created to service the general public since it is the sincere desire of the Utah State Office of Education that true democratic citizenship and civic engagement be practiced by the vast majority of the populace. These are the most powerful forces in molding public policy and effective governance.

Foundations

This past year many documents were created that provide a secure foundation for the efforts toward civic engagement in the schools.

In June of 2004, the Utah State Board of Education passed a resolution encouraging "the use of Academic Service learning to enhance and supplement the Utah State Core Curriculum..." and promote "the development of student commitment to active citizenship, community involvement, responsibility, and respect for the rule of law through the use of Academic Service Learning." In addition, the state board has approved

the creation of a new course, "U.S. Government and Citizenship" that has a core laden with civics objectives. The State Office is currently revising the state Life Skills Document, which promises to have a heavy civics emphasis, and will be distributed to schools in January, 2006.

The Utah Coalition for Civic and Service Learning (UCCSL) passed a resolution last November stating "that we will help instill in K-16 students the desire to become engaged citizens endowed with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Constitution Day, 9/17/05
- ◆ Dialogue on Democracy, 11/17-11/18, U. of U.
- ◆ Service Learning Grant Applications

confidence to participate fully in democratic life". This document has since been widely circulated and gathered many signatures expressing support.

[House Bill 22](#), passed last November, and sponsored by Representative Lavar Christensen, is specifically titled "Civic and Character Education in Schools" and requires all courses in the school to incorporate character education values.

Summer Happenings

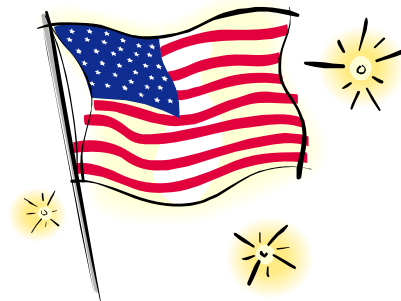
Several great civics-related workshops for teachers have already been held in locations around the state this summer.

In June, UCCSL and the Community of Caring sponsored "Educating for Democracy through Civic, Character, and Service Learning" at the University of Utah. Approximately 44 educators received some excellent instruction and picked up strategies for integration in the school climate and curriculum. We appreciate the work of Kristin Fink, national director for the Community of Caring in planning and preparing this workshop. A number of participants from the UCCSL, including Chief Justice Christine Durham, John Kesler, and Kathy Dryer were involved also.

During the week of June 27-30, 23 high school social studies teachers attended a retreat at the Sevier District in

Richfield, helping them to prepare to teach the new high school course in U.S. Government and Citizenship. Guest presenters at the retreat included Dr. Dan Jones, Justice Christine Durham, and Representative laVar Christensen. Peter Van Orden and Mary Moulton served as instructors for the course. Attendees left with numerous lesson plans, teaching hints and strategies to help them be effective in the coming year.

Granite School District sponsored 3 Rs training during June also, helping a group of teacher learn and implement the principles of rights, respect, and responsibility. Thanks to Martha Ball and Carolee Coleman for their continued efforts from the 1st Amendment Center.



UCCCSL NEWS

The Utah Coalition for Civics, Character and Service Learning, an organization comprised of several groups interested in Civic Education, met on July 6, in the Law and Justice Center. The mission of the coalition was reviewed, as were reports about summer inservice activities and the State Board of Education Life Skills Document.

John Kesler led a discussion of the

events planned for the "Dialog For Democracy" to be held November 17th and 18th at the University of Utah.

Committee members also reviewed plans for Constitution Day on September 17th. This day provides a unique opportunity for all schools receiving federal funds to offer instruction about our country's founding. Teaching resources for this day may be found at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/civics/index.htm>



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New Academic Service Learning Grant Applications

Through the great efforts of Verne Larson and his committee for Service Learning, we are pleased to announce the availability of federal funds for service learning projects for the 2005-2006 school year. Applications for funding are now available. All school districts in the state are encouraged to apply for this funding. Many successful projects have been launched in the past that have allowed students to be involved in their communities, giving service and learning about engaged

citizenship.

It is well documented that academic service learning has a great impact on individual students and the entire school. Positive school climate, closer school-community ties, and higher student achievement are just some of the affects of academic service learning programs. Grant applications are now available online at the new State Office Academic Service Learning Site at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/servicelearning/index.htm>

The "Economics of Goodness"

At the recent National Conference on Volunteering and Service, Health and Human Services Secretary, Mike Leavitt, discussed the connections between volunteerism and the overall health of the nation. Secretary Leavitt phrased this philosophy the "Economics of Goodness" and gave practical examples

of the ways volunteer service benefits the entire populace in terms of physical, moral and economic well being. For a more thorough account of his address, check the site at http://www.cns.gov/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=167

Great Resources

The Foundation for a Better Life (<http://www.forbetterlife.org>) - this nonprofit organization has a wealth of value stories, video clips, and positive ideas. Schools who email them can get a free set of posters.

Create Your Own Notebook - Lessons in Core Democratic Values - (<http://www.michiganepic.org/coredemocratic/>). Flash movies present case studies in 7 core values.

USINFO.STATE.GOV
(<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/principles/index.htm>) - publication with 21 single page handouts on democratic principles -

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USOE Websites:

Character Ed - http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/default.htm

Civics - <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/civics/index.htm>

Service Learning - <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/servicelearning/index.htm>